Two months later the mayor lost her re-election bid, in part because of the plan. It has lain dormant ever since.

Making a difference in people's lives in ways that matter; preserving a traditional occupation; saving a traditional bay house from destruction. These are the reasons I became a public sector folklorist. Using the tools of historic preservationists, environmentalists, and union organizers, we can help preserve ways of life that are meaningful, but jeopardized. Those I interview often caution me "not to turn them and their culture into museum pieces." Following in the footsteps of activist folklorists like Archie Green and Steven Zeitlin, I do not gain satisfaction through mere documentation. Through working with communities, I believe we can stem the tide of standardization and bring recognition to those places that foster cultural nurturing of the individual human spirit.

The Art Gallery as Sacred Space: Folklife Need Not Appear

Kristin G. Congdon, University of Central Florida

I was an assistant professor of art education in the School of Art at Bowling Green State University in Ohio in the mid-1980s. Doug Blandy, also an assistant professor at the time, and I decided to coordinate an exhibition in the School of Art Gallery. We were exploring the idea that art and aesthetic representations should present more than a so-called fine art perspective. Since fishing is ubiquitous in the area, we decided to represent the local fishing culture and the aesthetic dimensions that went with it.

We wrote a proposal to the Gallery Committee that was promptly rejected. We rewrote it attaching supporting theory from journals that studio artists would recognize. We were rejected again. Still, we persisted, and were finally told that if we could get an outside grant to support the project, they would accept our exhibition. When the Ohio Arts Council Folk Arts Program enthusiastically funded our grant, the Gallery Committee had to give us the go-ahead to plan an exhibition that some faculty members vehemently disliked.

We hired Lucy Long to do folklore fieldwork while Blandy and I coordinated the project. She identified experts in various endeavors such as fly tying, rod wrapping, and taxidermy. These individuals curated sections of the gallery. Often reluctant to let prized possessions out of their homes, fishers were insistent that their pieces be well insured.

"Boats, Bait, and Fishing Paraphernalia: A Local Fishing Aesthetic" opened in February 1987. People came early and stayed late. Artists demonstrated their talents and a fisher-in-residence gave context to the art and aesthetics. Participants

fried fish, packed coolers, and showed old fishing films. Storytelling, formal and informal, was pervasive. More people attended this exhibition than any other in the history of the school. *CNN, USA Today,* and *Field and Stream* did stories, and the university won an award for publicity.

I thought the overwhelming public response to the exhibition would vindicate our efforts. Our belief that folk aesthetics are valuable and important and could successfully exist in an art gallery frame of reference seemed self-evident. However, several art faculty members boycotted the exhibition and, with its success, became angrier than ever. Others recognized the exhibition's popularity but suggested that it should have taken place in the Popular Culture Department and not in the School of Art Gallery.

Doug Blandy and I both left Bowling Green State University that summer. Since that time I have had other, perhaps less difficult, battles over folk aesthetics and how and why they should be made visible. The "fishing show" made clear to me how important it is to many members of the Art World that art remain hierarchical. I currently do folklore fieldwork in a different university art department, where aesthetic hierarchies are still intact. But I now recognize the extreme battles that can take place when folk meets fine art.

The Up-Side of Folklife Festivals: Why We Keep Doing Them

Andrea Graham
Nevada Arts Council

Despite my current disillusionment with folklife festivals, I realize that some of my most memorable and satisfactory experiences as a public folklorist have come during these maligned but seemingly indestructible events. All public folklorists have stories of priceless moments. Here are a few of mine.

At a recent festival we co-sponsored in Las Vegas, Nevada, the Iranian community really turned out and its members made themselves at home throughout the event. Whole families attended. They sponsored a food booth and spent all day barbecuing kabobs in the ninety-degree heat. They set up three tables filled with traditional crafts around a painter who was demonstrating as a boom box played traditional music in the background. When a family musical group stepped up to sing and play the drum and fiddle near the end of the day, community members jumped up and began dancing in front of the stage, shouting requests, clapping and cheering one another on. It was not just a performance for outsiders; it was a community event. For me, it was the highlight of the festival.